



LEWIS & CLARK CITY-COUNTY Health Department

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March 8, 2007

The Honorable John Sinrud
Montana House of Representatives
PO Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

EXHIBIT 4
DATE 3-9-07
HB 148

RE: HB 148 – Swimming pool fee bill

Dear Representative Sinrud:

The Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department is in support of HB 148. Our health department is currently responsible for all pool inspections in Lewis & Clark County. Pool inspections evaluate pool safety measures and water quality to reduce the likelihood of accidental death or injury and prevent the spread of communicable disease. This is a valuable service provided to pool operators.

The Montana Innkeepers Association supported this bill. Fifty four percent of the pool facilities licensed in Lewis & Clark County are associated with public accommodations.

Currently, over 70% of the funding for the public pool program in Lewis & Clark County is supported by county tax dollars. The general taxpayers are paying for a service used by a limited number in the community. The proposed fees would be paid by the pool operator and can be shared with the pool users. The new fees would cover the costs of the program for this county. This is a reasonable cost to provide minimal pool safety.

The best service to pool operators is provided by having the local health department responsible for pool inspections. We are familiar with the facility and can respond more quickly to complaints from the public and questions from the operators. We don't anticipate being able to continue to subsidize pool safety to the detriment of other public health services. If Lewis & Clark County can't continue, the responsibility for pool inspections would fall to DPHHS. Of course, DPHHS is responsible for the entire state and pool owners and the public will not get the same level of service.

We urge your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Melanie Reynolds
Lewis & Clark City-County Health Officer